

Apr

1999



Yankee Air Museum

P.O. Box 590

Belleville, MI 48112

Tel. (734) 483 - 4030

Hangar Happenin's

is a monthly newsletter
for the Yankee Air Force

Editors: Bill Abbott
Evelyn Rouse

Computer Publishing: Bob Seaton

Contributors:
Daniel Tomczak Connie Kosek
Don Burke J.D. Hill
Bill Hanney Roger Peterson
Mary Ann Bittner Bernie Hallman
Kevin T. Walsh Jim Beck

Officers of The Yankee Air Force:

President: Bill Hanney
Vice-President: John Day
Secretary: Mary Jane Medlock-Hill
Treasurer: Nancy Lockwood
Assistant Treasurer: Nina Smith

Board Members:

Deane Baker Don Harner
Erwin Stirnweis Paul Chu Lin
George Whitfield George Davis
Ray Hunter Ken Strafer
Clayton Jones J.D. Hill
Ray Jackson

Meeting Schedule

1st Wednesday of Month - 7:30 PM
General Membership
3rd Wednesday of Month - 7:30 PM
Board Meeting
Public Welcome

MUSEUM HOURS

10 - 4 TUESDAY SATURDAY
12 - 4 SUNDAY
CLOSED MONDAYS AND HOLIDAYS



EVELYN ROUSE & BILL ABBOTT
Our Editors

From the Editors' Desk:

It was a busy month (February) at the HH office. Several months ago, we told you that we had purchased a new printer and we would be able to have more and better quality pictures in the newsletter. Well, as you were able to see we had not kept our promise, at least until the March issue.

You were able (we hope) to see a remarkable difference in the quality of the whole publication. Two of the staff went to our printers - *Huron Valley Printing & Imaging*- in Ypsilanti. They met with the manager, Mark Boone. We explained what we had expected and what we had gotten and asked what had we done wrong? Well, it seems nothing. Our printing plates had been produced by photographing our master copies. The camera tried to balance light and dark and so our pictures were made darker than they should have been, along with most everything else.

We already knew that the printers used the same software as we did. They suggested that we bring HH to them on a disk. We had made several attempts to save to a floppy disk only to have our computer say sorry, not enough room on your disk. Seems we would have needed six 3.5 in. floppy disks to do this. Well, we already knew what the answer to that problem was: we needed a large capacity floppy. An Iomega Zip™ drive was acquired (at no expense to YAF, incidentally) and the newsletter was saved on this disk.

Our two staffers then took the disk back to the printer four days earlier than normal. A proof was made, and we had more problems. Seems we forgot to tell the software that we were taking our creation to an outside printer, so much got lost in translation. Back they came, spent 5 hours straightening out the problems, and now we are truly a digital publication.

We of the staff spend over 40 hours in three weeks to produce what you have come to expect. What this says is that we have some really dedicated and talented people, not only on this staff but throughout the organization. When you do something you enjoy, it's not work. We hope you appreciate our efforts. We promise to just keep getting better **no matter what it takes** - enjoy!

The Staff

Our internet address is:
<http://www.yankeeairmuseum.org>
 Our e-mail address is:
yankeeairmuseum@provide.net
 Hangar Happenin's e-mail address is:
seaton@provide.net

Who was that?

The photo in last month's issue was taken in early spring in 1946 in Willis, Michigan.

We made the picture wider to throw you off! It is of our resident answer man: Harold Sherman.

Visitors to the Museum

as of March 7, 1999
 from 5 States, Italy, Hungary, & Great Britain

Past Dates of Interest

6 Apr 1938	P-39 Airacobra first fighter to carry 37mm cannon (by Oldsmobile in Lansing)
12 Apr 1961	First manned spaceflight
18 Apr 1942	The Doolittle Raid: 16 B25s fly from USS <i>Hornet</i> in surprise attack on Japan
18 Apr 1943	Japanese Admiral Yamamoto, flying in a Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" bomber, killed when intercepted by 16 P-38s
19 Apr 1989	Explosion & fire on battleship USS <i>Iowa</i> kills 47
25 Apr 1990	Space Shuttle "Discovery" launches Hubble Space Telescope
28 Apr 1945	Mussolini executed
30 Apr 1945	Hitler commits suicide
30 Apr 1975	Vietnam War ends

Winner of the March meeting
 50/50 drawing was
 Bob Manley
 donating his prize to the Waco CG-4A Glider



From the Head - Office, That Is!

by Bill Hanney, President

Good grief, Charlie Brown! Another month has flown by and here I am still overgross and struggling to get off the ground with this column writing.

Talk about a slave-driver! This guy Seaton has really put the muscle on me. If I don't turn this in on time, he has threatened to publish this issue with a blank column, or worse yet, to fill it with my photo!

Since last month, we have been advised of an aircraft that is available as a donation—a just completed restoration and licensed, also. Let's hope we win the competition with every other museum that would like a free airplane.

We are attempting at this time to work out the concerns with Mid-Michigan Division. Mr. Dennis Garner has agreed to function as manager until new Council and officers have been installed. We hope this can be accomplished shortly.

As this is written, I am anticipating a trip to Washington DC for the Mutual Concerns of Air & Space Museums Seminar. Erwin Stirnweis, Ray Jackson and I will attend and, hopefully, return with some valuable information and contacts.

Bill Hanney

P.S. Don't forget to bring in the Bill Knapp's Community Service slips. We can use the help and it won't cost you one penny. That deal makes "cents" to me (groan)!

IRS agent to taxpayer: "I'm afraid we can't allow you to deduct last year's tax as a bad investment."

DIVISION NEWS -



Wurtsmith Division Oscoda, MI

Now is the time for all good men- and women - to come to the aid of their party. The upstairs building program is completed as of Feb. 9. Saturday workdays from now till May 15 will be devoted to setting up new displays in the museum, and revising some of the old ones. The new meeting room is a thing of beauty. At last Saturday's mammoth auction, we picked up an unused apartment-size refrigerator and a large Coleman tug. This baby will move anything, including a DC-8.

Our new furnace was installed on Feb. 8 - no more frozen pipes! Seriously, we could not have accomplished what we did without the unstinting devotion and dedication of a handful of the members, notably Clyde Soucie, Ray Marchionna, Bill Desilets, Dave Esmann, Bob and Louise Sanderson, Ray McLaughlin, and Isabelle McLaughlin, who supplied the hot lunches.

We are now looking forward to reception of the DC-8 from AIA in the Spring, but are still waiting to hear from Headquarters on the promised A-7, for we have a member who was a crew-chief on same and who is anxious to get his hands dirty.

We are looking forward to a successful summer in '99.
by Jim McLaughlin - Chairman



Mid-Michigan Division Lapeer, MI

Museum News -

The new boiler is still going strong. The meeting room was warm and toasty during the meeting night of January 20th (the meeting was postponed a week due to the weather).

A couple of guys who need to be given more kudos for their boiler work are Jerry Smith and Larry Hartley.

Jerry apparently did all the wiring of the boiler and managed to make two good zone valves from the parts of five.

Larry provided the very valuable wiring diagrams Jerry needed for his work. Thanks, guys. Great Job!

Snow Removal -

Thanks to Dave Hingst we were able to get into the museum and park without getting hung up in all the snow. For the past few years we haven't gotten enough snow all at once to even worry about it. January this year was more like the old days when we had real winter weather. We get spoiled real easy. Thanks again, Dave.

Holiday Dinner -

We had talked about having a Holiday Dinner in February this year, however, after more discussion it now looks like we'll move the dinner to the Fall and refer to it as a "Thank You Dinner."

The dinner would come right after our busy time of the year and serve as a way to recognize everyone who had contributed. It would be held sometime after Founders' Day and before Thanksgiving, a time of year when driving conditions shouldn't be a problem.

Open House -

The request for our annual Open House at the DuPont-Lapeer Airport has been submitted to the Airport Board by Dennis Garner. There should be no problem getting their approval.

It's never too early to start thinking and planning for this very important MMD event. Last year was a bit disappointing; but if we all pull together and get some decent weather, there's great potential for making some good money.

If you have any thoughts on how the Open House can be improved, please contact an Officer or Council member.
by Jerry Fantini - Editor "Wing Tips"



COW CATCHER -

The crew of a trawler which sank in the Sea of Japan claimed the ship went down after being struck by a cow which fell out of the clear blue sky and went straight through the hull. No one believed their tale until, a few weeks later, confirmation came from Russia that the crew of one of its military cargo jets had stolen a cow they found wandering on a Siberian airfield and loaded it aboard for the flight home. While the airplane was cruising at 30,000 feet the terrified, unrestrained beast ran amok, so the crew lowered the cargo ramp and it jumped out.

Sewing and Ironing 101

by Daniel Tomczak

Mention a class in sewing and ironing and most men will find something else to do. When the Yankee Air Force held a class in sewing and ironing, there was a line-up of willing participants. Why? It is because the sewing and ironing was on the control surfaces of a World War II glider.

The Waco CG-4A glider is being restored by a crew led by Joe Kosek. Covering the aircraft with fabric is an important part of the restoration process. Unfortunately, the art of fabric recovery is almost a lost skill. Recently two topics were dropped from the Airframe and Powerplant course curriculum: Radial engines and fabric recovery. Lucky for the Yankee Air Force, several members have gained the skills and knowledge in fabric recovery and are willing to teach others. Bill Rodgers and the "skonk works" crew are leading the fabric recovery class on the glider. Bill is great at leading the class because of his skill (he has recovered many aircraft including his own Stearman biplane) and his patience in dealing with students.

The first project for the class was the elevator for the glider. These parts found in a barn still had on the original fabric. The first step in the recovery process is an examination of the wooden structure. To do this, the old fabric had to be removed. Then all of the animal nests, dirt, and crud had to be removed. The debris filled a garbage can! (*photo 1*) After cleaning all of the nooks and crevices, the structure could be inspected. During inspection several ribs were found to be broken. These were repaired, and then the entire elevator structure was sanded and varnished (*photos 2 & 3*).

The next step in the recovery process was to apply the fabric to the elevator. (*photo 4*) The polyester fabric of the right weight, which depends upon the speed of the aircraft, was cut to shape. The fabric is then glued to the bottom edge of the elevator structure and pulled to the trailing edge of the elevator, then cut to fit and glued in place. The elevator was flipped over and the other side was covered with fabric. Then it was time to get out the warm irons. The fabric is ironed just like clothes coming out of a dryer. This shrinks the fabric and gets out the wrinkles. The entire fabric is then painted with a dope. (*photo 7*) This shrinks, strengthens and stiffens the fabric. (It also gives the

workers a lightheaded buzz if the fumes are breathed in; no wonder they called it dope!)

After the dope dries, the sewing fun begins. This keeps the fabric attached to the structure. First a pattern of dots is drawn along each side of every rib structure. They are spaced an inch apart on both the top and bottom of the elevator. (Spacing depends on the speed of the aircraft. The faster the aircraft, the closer the stitches.) Then the long needles are brought out. These are huge (at least when they are compared to regular sewing needles), measuring about 10 - 12 inches long. The special thread is threaded through the eye. There are three knots that must be learned to stitch the fabric; a starting knot, the main middle knot and an ending knot. The middle knot goes something like this: Come up through the fabric from the bottom surface, hold on to one end of the thread, go over the rib forming a loop, pass under the rib and come out of the same hole on the other side of the rib, then still holding on to the loop and first thread, go over, around and over the loop and thread. Then release the loop, while still holding on to the first thread. Finally pull the first thread tight and you have a perfect knot. (*photo 5*) It actually sounds difficult, but after several hundred stitches it becomes easier. (I can't understand why aluminum is in today's aircraft!)

The next step in the recovery process is the addition of reinforcement cover strips over the stitching. The are glued on with dope. Then drain, inspection and access holes are cut into the fabric. The access holes allow the attachment of the control cables and hinges. These areas are reinforced with additional strips of fabric and dope.

The elevator receives a light sanding to remove drips from the dope. Silver paint is applied to the entire surface. This paint keeps ultraviolet light from deteriorating the fabric. The paint is lightly sanded, and painted again. Finally the finish coat of paint is applied, sanded, applied again until a smooth surface is achieved. Then it is time to start the entire process over again on the other elevator.

The fabric class is still continuing every Saturday morning during the spring. There are many square feet of fabric on the CG-4A glider and work will continue for a while. In the end, the Yankee Air Force Museum will have a rare showpiece of which we can all be very proud!

Photo 1 Mary Jane Medlock-Hill and Hal Young clean and inspect.



Photo 2 After the structure is inspected, repairs are made.

Barry's answer: The plant was originally the Ford airplane factory.

Photo 3 After all the repairs are made the elevator was varnished.



Photo 4 Professor Bill Rodgers supervises the stretching of the fabric (LtoR) Matt Hurd, Prof. Bill Rodgers, Mary Jane Medlock-Hill, Bob Kenworthy Sr. and Bob Kenworthy Jr.



**Professor Wm.
(you can call me
Bill) Rodgers
KTE***

**Sewing 101 Class
Pictures**

Knot tying expert *

Photos Les Kellogg
Bob Seaton

Photo 5 The Knot Tying Expert himself shows the proper method of sewing the fabric on to the elevator.



Photo 6 (above) The view from the underside showing the stitches around the ribs.

Photo 7 (right) Mary Jane Medlock-Hill is supervised by Ted Edmonds, Bob Kenworthy Sr. and Les Kellogg.





THE BERLIN AIRLIFT - REVISITED

by J.B. McLaughlin Col., USAF (Ret.)

(USAF)

Continued from the March issue-

Fortunately, the Russians failed to take into account either the superb pilots of the 60th and 61st Troop Carrier or the best GCA unit I've ever encountered. Those GCA crews brought us down between the apartment buildings, regular as clockwork, 3 minutes apart, around the clock. We began to regard the approach to Wiesbaden as more dangerous than Berlin. ATC was better at Berlin.

For instance, I was flying "Willie One" (first aircraft in a westbound block from Tempelhof to Wiesbaden) in the soup, with an inoperative transmitter. We acknowledged instructions from ATC by clicking the mike button: once for "Yes," twice for "No." Wiesbaden Approach cleared us to hold one minute east of the Wiesbaden Beacon at 5000'. Click. A few minutes later I heard Approach Control say, "Willie Six, hold one minute east of Wiesbaden Beacon at 5000!"

I chopped all power, slammed the nose down, and caught a glimpse of "Willie Six" as he passed about 20 feet overhead. Just then the Wiesbaden Controller gasped, "MiGod, I forgot Willie One!"

The Controller in question was a good friend of mine, but we had a few words that evening. Over a martini. In all fairness, things at that stage were so disorganized, and everyone was so overworked that mistakes were bound to happen.

Flight crews flew around the clock, grabbing coffee and a sandwich while aircraft were serviced and reloaded. After about 36 hours on the job, we'd catch 12 hours' sleep, hopefully a solid meal, and start over. Air Traffic Controllers were just overworked.

Enter General William H. Tunner. Tunner made

his reputation running the "Hump" in WWII, and that man knew how to run an airlift! In a very short time he had things running smoothly. A block of aircraft took off three minutes apart, flew to Tempelhof, landed three minutes apart. One corridor in, another out. If you missed the approach (pretty rare, actually), you took the out corridor and went back to Wiesbaden. No delays. Maximum tonnage.

Oh, the navigation equipment was still primitive, and the airplanes stunk to high heaven of sour milk or coal dust; but things ran a lot smoother. Most of us had become very proficient instrument pilots (we were alive to prove it!) and could find our way to Berlin without a lot of help.

I always tried to get the first aircraft in my block, because it was loaded with milk and was assigned the lowest altitude. This milk came from Denmark in bottles almost exactly like today's one-liter Pepsi-Cola bottles. At altitude the milk tended to rise in the bottle neck and pop off the pressed-paper cap. Funny thing—on every trip there always seemed to be two liters whose tops would pop at altitude and would be empty on arrival. Milk was very hard to come by in Germany in 1948.

Tempelhof was not an ideal airfield for a massive air cargo operation. Located in the center of Berlin, very near the East German boundary, it was small, more or less circular in shape, and little more than 5000 feet in diameter. The eastern side was taken up by terminal buildings, and there was a concrete taxi ramp 400-500 feet wide around the exterior boundary, which was a brick or concrete wall about 5 feet high. The surface was grass! Obviously the German engineers had never foreseen the volume of traffic generated by an airlift. Landings were, of necessity, always to the East and take-offs to the West. Tunner brought over the C-54s and got them flying out of Rhein-Main. They had trouble with Tempelhof, which was heavily rutted by this time. Those ruts were axle-deep to a C-47. Not at all good for aircraft with nosewheels.

It was obvious that the 54s couldn't operate off that rutted grass, so they built them a runway. Till the day I left, however, we always used the grass or cheated off the taxi ramp. Hold the brakes. Take-off power. Release brakes. Roll about 400 feet and pop

(Continued from page 6)

half-flaps. Stagger into the air and wallow out for the next 3 or 4 miles at V2, until you could safely milk up the flaps. It wasn't real bright of us, but we had the only airplane that would allow us to do it. So we did.

I've had the privilege of flying with many of the world's best aviators. Any airline pilot does, but none of them were any better than that bunch of young C-47 pilots who carried the ball in those first few months of the Berlin Airlift.

My logbook tells me that I flew 196 roundtrips to Berlin in 1948 (right around 1000 hours). Since then I have logged nearly 25,000 accident-free hours, 8000 of them in "Gooney Birds," either of C-47 or DC-3 persuasion. I've flown military jets and civilian airliners, some lovely aircraft, and a couple of real dogs. The softest spot in my heart, however, is reserved for the old girl that some wag at Carswell once christened "*Hustler's Mother*." She came off the line at Douglas before most of today's pilots were born, and, at scattered airfields around the globe, she's flying still. Long may she continue to do so.



DC-3/C-47 MEMORIES

by Bert Huneault # 4107 WR

As a Yankee Air Force member from Canada (living in Windsor, Ontario), I occasionally drop in to visit the YAF Museum at Willow Run, and every time I see our beautiful C-47 it reminds me of my association with Dakotas (a.k.a. DC-3) when I was a bush airline radio operator in the Labrador wilderness some 50 years ago (1947-1950).

For a while I was stationed at Ashuanipi Lake near the Quebec-Labrador border. The station consisted of a couple of log cabins in the middle of the bush, 200 miles north of Sept-Iles (on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence). There were only two of us up there, and we operated a weather station, a navaid (radio beacon), air/ground radio communications; and also relayed company messages in Morse code from the outside world to the mining exploration center at Knob Lake (160

miles further north), the site of the present-day community of Schefferville.

Our food, fuel, mail, etc. were supplied by bush planes operating on floats in the summer and skis during winter. But during freeze-up in the fall and break-up in the spring these planes didn't fly, so we depended on air drops by company DC-3s for our mail. The following anecdotes relate to that legendary type of aircraft.

MY FIRST FLIGHT

In the summer of 1947, I was hired as a radio operator by Canadian Pacific Airlines. The company flew me from Mont-Joli (on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River) to Sept-Iles in DC-3 CF-CUC. This was my very first airplane ride and I'll always remember the surprise I got when we flew through light turbulence and I saw the wings bending up and down. I didn't know that metal wings were supposed to flex like that!

YOU CAN'T SNEAK UP ON A DC-3 DRIVER

On another occasion, I was the only passenger aboard a company DC-3, flying up to Knob Lake. Once we reached cruising altitude, I decided to go up to the "front office" and talk to the crew. As I approached the flight deck, the pilot said "Hi Bert", without even turning his head to look back. So I asked him "How did you know I was coming?" He answered "Because I had to readjust the elevator trim as you walked forward". So that was another thing I learned about the "Gooney Bird".

A MAILBAG THAT REFUSED TO FALL

On one occasion when a DC-3 flying low over our base at Ashuanipi Lake dropped a mailbag, the bag got caught on the leading edge of the horizontal stabilizer and stayed there. When I radioed the disappointing fact to the pilot, he came back for another pass and shook the control column in an attempt to dislodge the bag... but no luck! So he flew back to Sept Iles airport, taxied at high speed to the terminal, and when he stopped the bag fell to the ground! We got our mail the next day.

NO JOY AT CHRISTMAS

Shortly before December 25 one year, a DC-3 pilot flying from Sept-Iles to Knob Lake radioed that he

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had mail for us; he was going to drop it on the way. My buddy and I were really looking forward to this, because the mailbag contained our Christmas mail – cards, letters and presents! When you're away from civilization like this, for months on end, you really look forward to receiving mail.

There was a passenger aboard the DC-3, and the crew enlisted his help for the drop. As the plane approached Ashuanipi Lake, the co-pilot opened the cargo door and placed the mailbag by the passenger's feet, right next to the door; he told the guy to look up front towards the cockpit, and instructed him to kick the bag out as soon as he saw the pilot drop his hand. Unfortunately, while the plane was still about 5 miles south of our station, the pilot moved his right hand to adjust one of the controls and the passenger interpreted this as the hand signal he was waiting for. So, out went the bag!

When the pilot told us the bad news over the radio, it goes without saying that there was no joy at Ashuanipi! So my buddy and I closed down the station and headed across the lake on skis. When we finally reached the forested area where the pilot told us the bag had come down, we searched and searched in vain for hours. The bag was either buried in deep snow or caught in one of the trees; we never found it. For all I know, some 50 years later, it's probably still up there, somewhere in the bush. That DC-3 provided us with a Christmas to remember.



**C
Connie's
r
ner**

1949! Fifty years ago!

In 1949, many of our Yankee members were home from World War II, trying to get used to civilian life again, marrying their gals who waited for them. Many took advantage of the G.I. Bill and went back to finish college.

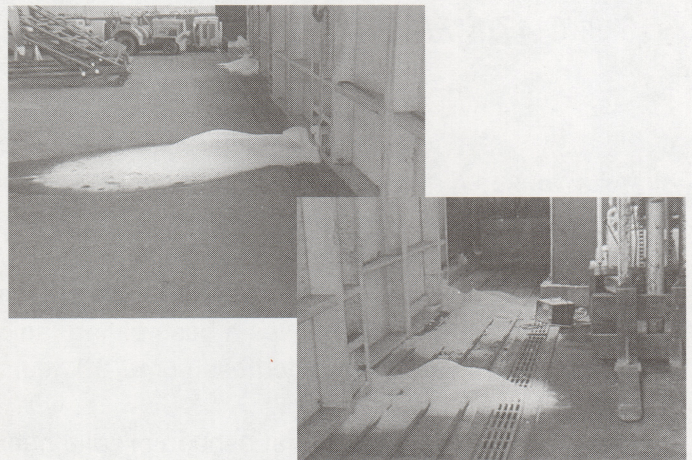
The American President was Harry Truman. The beginning of the year 1949 saw the Soviet Union's blockage of West Berlin continuing, as Allied Forces kept the city supplied by the airlift. The inauguration of President Harry Truman and Vice President Alben Barkley in 1949 was televised and seen by ten million

people. The demand for new cars was overwhelming and over 6 million cars rolled off assembly lines, making for a good economy. Consumer goods made their debut in 1949, including prepared cake mixes, home permanents, and Oreo cookies.

An obscure Argentine card game called "Canasta" reached fad proportions. There were 244 sightings of so-called "flying saucers." In Los Angeles, California, a dynamic young evangelist named Billy Graham began to make a name for himself and goes on to be present with every U.S. President to serve our country. The Roller Derby would become TV's favorite sport to view. Most popular movies were Bob Hope in "Sorrowful Jones" and "All the King's Men" would give Broderick Crawford an Academy Award. The world's most famous cowboy, Gene Autry, recorded the Christmas song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." New 45 RPM records were introduced. In medicine, arthritis sufferers rejoiced the discovery of Cortisone. Yes ... 1949 was a happy year, even with a Cold War taking place.

P.S.

Best Supporting Actor in 1949
was Dean Jagger in *Twelve O'Clock High*.



These are pictures of what came through the Hangar doors on March 6, 1999. About 12 brave souls, came out to the Hangar to get out of doing their "Honey Do's". Special thanks to Dale Shoup # 4142WR who braved the cold and blowing snow to shovel a path to the doors, front and back – Thanks, Dale!

Editors Note: We have a new contributor, and we thought you would find his short biography interesting. After the war Ben Adams attended the University of Pennsylvania and studied History and Political Science with the hopes of becoming a lawyer. He felt a need for something else and transferred to Princeton Theological Seminary and was ordained a Presbyterian Minister in June of 1952. As he put it "I was more frightened of Ladies Aids in civilian churches than combat." He went back to the military and was commissioned a First Lt. Chaplain in the USAF. He was assigned to training bases in Texas and Mississippi. His job at these bases was to attend to the casualties and the deceased and their families stateside during the Korean War. After three years and having attained the rank of Major he left the military to become a civilian minister, and married "my Jane." He pastored three churches in New Jersey until 1963. He decided to get more training and was qualified as a Pastoral Psychologist and got certification as a psychoanalyst receiving his Doctorate in the process. He founded a clinic where he was the Executive Director for some 20 years, retiring about 1990. He at that time became involved with his original unit, the 483rd Bombardment Group (H) Association, and in 1994 he was made their Chaplain, "a profoundly moving experience" for him. He is currently still involved in a small practice "to keep my mind active." Ben became a member of the Yankee Air Force in 1998 by taking a Historic Flight Experience on our B-17, "a very emotionally moving ride as an old BT gunner."

"SOMEONE – UP – THERE...."

483rd Bombardment Group (H), 15th AF, Italy
 TARGET: Bologna Troop Concentration Area, April 10, 1945

by Sgt. Ben H. Adams; Group Association Chaplain
 1999, #G05814NE

This raid was memorable, miraculous, and frightening! Our target was a Nazi troop concentration area near Bologna Italy. Our mission was to soften up the enemy in advance of the push north by the British Eighth Army under the command of General "Monty" Montgomery. Our bomb load was two tons of anti-personnel bombs that explode into a myriad of small fragments. Our altitude was only 18,000 feet, unusually low for us. We did not have far to go from

our base at Steparone near Foggia on the Adriatic Sea. We were all together on Captain Richard Wilson's crew: "Dusty" Glenn Rhoades, co-pilot; Donald Rice, bombardier; Wally Briggs, navigator; Bob Plough, top-turret gunner and engineer; John Meakim, radioman; Ben Adams, ball-turret gunner; Dean Plank, right waist gunner; Augie Frederick, left waist gunner; and Gerritt Van Dyk, tail gunner. Little did we know then that this mission would turn out to be so dramatically unbelievable!

Approaching the target, the British had huge white arrows on the ground and shot up red smoke to 10,000 feet pointing the way. From 18,000 our target looked like an innocent very green large field. We dropped our anti-personnel frags and from my very good vantage point in the ball turret, I saw them tumbling out the bomb bay and shortly saw their sparking flashes on the ground. Obviously, we were doing a lot of damage right on target..

Well, that's over we all thought. Another milk run, little realizing that we were still over enemy territory! After scanning the view below, I swung my ball turret forward toward the nose of our B-17. Suddenly, I saw a huge black puff just forward of our plane's nose and immediately became aware of a huge explosion.... WOOMP! !!! Then there were two more huge black puffs off both the left and the right wing tips.... WOOMP! !!!...WOOMP! !!! The flak sounded as if loads of gravel was being thrown at a tin roof! Believe me, I now know that it's really possible for one's hair to literally stand up because my helmet actually lifted up! The German 88 antiaircraft shells had us perfectly bracketed with their salvo. Then there was a heavy silence...except for the beautiful sound of our four engines still roaring. Then there was a babble of voices screaming over the intercom. Pilot Dick Wilson screamed "Shut up!!" and then softly asked every position to report in. Incredibly, all ten of us from the nose to the tail reported in as shaken but all OK! Miraculously, none of us were even slightly wounded. I sensed that our ship, the *Sky Wolf*, was limping, struggling to keep up with the squadron. Later, after dropping down to 10,000 feet, I got off oxygen and clambered up and out of my ball-turret. I was shocked at what I saw inside the waist of our ship. Daylight was streaming in through jagged holes everywhere. The rudder lines were severed and hanging in big lazy loops. That is why our ship was struggling to keep on

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course because we had no rudder controls until we switched to steering with the ailerons and engines for direction. Then she stabilized.

The Plexiglas lookout in the tail section just over Gerritt Van Dyk's head was completely shot out when his head was down examining his twin fifties! A thumb-sized piece of flak went through Dean Plank's flying trousers leaving a big purple bruise. Later, we told him he should have picked it so that he could put in for a Purple Heart. Left waist gunner Augie was OK. Flak ricocheted off my ball turret shaft severing a ground cable but my turret still worked. Flak went into all the ammunition boxes but it didn't go off. Red hydraulic fluid spurted out of the severed lines just over Wally Briggs' head and all over him. He looked like a bloody mess and he at first thought he was a goner but he was OK, too!! So was bombardier Donald Rice, Dick Wilson, and co-pilot Dusty Rhoades except that Dusty had a neat groove dug through the top of his flying boot.

We landed back at Steparone in formation, one after the other. Dropping down on the runway, pilot Wilson suddenly became aware to his shock that we had no brakes because of the loss of hydraulic fluid. He yelled into the intercom for us to brace ourselves. In order to avoid running down and chewing up the plane just ahead of us, he ran that big B-17 expertly over the side of the runway into a ditch. That stopped us! That wonderful ship that brought us all back safely, stood on its nose and then slammed back down, never to fly again. It never even burned.

It certainly seemed as if *SOMEONE-UP-THERE* was looking out for all of us. Such was the saga of the *Sky Wolf* on April 10, 1945. Maybe all of that had something to do with Sgt. Ben Adams deciding to become a "sky pilot" minister, going to seminary after the war, and becoming a USAF chaplain during the Korean War. We guess *He* must have had some plan and purpose for all of us.



From the Friday Tour Desk

by Stan Wiece

The weather began to warm up in February and the number of visitors began to increase. Since the local residents wait for milder weather to visit the museum, a fair portion of the visitors on Friday are out of state. Generally they are business types returning home and notice our sign on I-94 freeway enroute to

Detroit Metro airport. We had several people from the United Kingdom visit us the first two Fridays. The Snow Jam Camp, made up of youngsters grades 1 thru 4, came to the museum the third Friday. The boys and girls had a good time and asked some good questions during the tour. The fourth Friday morning greeted us with a pea soup fog! Extreme caution was required during the drive to Willow Run airport, especially at major intersections since some traffic lights were not visible until arriving within a few feet of the intersection. Two men on the way home to Hungary stopped by as we opened at 10:00 am. They were anxious to photograph some of our aircraft, especially our unique B-52 with the shark's teeth painted on the nose. Needless to say, the fog prevented them from getting good pictures.

February was not as cold as it usually is and we are beginning to have groups visit us. In addition to the Snow Jam Camp, we had two Tiger Scout groups and Children's World visit the museum during the last two weeks of February.

Our Friday gift shop sales lady, Karen Ellickson and her husband Norm took a well deserved one week respite from the winter weather and flew down to Florida to enjoy the climate with friends.

Stan sez: Would a fly without wings be called a walk?



"Sans Culotte"

By Harold Sherman

Since I have been collecting nicknames of U.S. airplanes of WWII, I have come across quite a few unusual ones. Some of the reasons for naming an airplane "such and such" are fairly obvious and many other reasons and/or stories behind the names have been quite interesting.

Recently, I ran across the July 20, 1944, issue of the "*Boeing News Weekly*" from Renton, Washington, which presented the story of a B-17 called "*Sans Culotte*". Its nose art consisted of a tall, running character clad in red undershorts with yellow polka-dots and with three stars on his shoulders.

Near the beachhead in North Africa where General Clark first landed, he took over an Arab farmhouse as his hideout. However, the Arabs gave away his position to the Germans and when bombs began to fall he got out of it in a hurry — without his pants. Hence, the nose art was conceived and the name, "*Sans Culotte*", given to his B-17.

Airshow policies and procedures

The Yankee Air Force Museum participates in several airshows each year with the museum's flyable aircraft. Yankee Air Force members are eligible to attend as aircrew members to help support the Museum's operations.

Participation of a Yankee Air Force aircraft at an airshow takes a coordinated effort. There are several people involved in this process. This includes an airshow scheduler, aircrew coordinator and retail sales manager. The airshow scheduler determines the aircraft participation at an airshow, and negotiates the accommodations and other needs. The aircrew coordinator uses the information from the airshow scheduler to fill the remaining seats on an aircraft. The aircrew coordinator will select all crewmembers except Pilot, Co-Pilot, and Flight Engineer. On each airplane the retail sales manager recommends one representative. These retail slots will be filled first. Next any specialty positions will be filled. An example of this is the crewmember who coordinates the historic flight experience, an extra pilot or a flight engineer. Any crewmember slots remaining will then be filled through the selection process. The crew members are there to support the museum's aircraft. This includes retail sales, tours and dog tags.

Selection process for air show participation:

All airshow participation requests must be in writing to the aircrew coordinator. No verbal requests will be taken. Airshow request forms will be available in the gift shop, membership office, near the mailboxes in the upstairs office area, and from the aircrew scheduler. Completed airshow participation request forms can be returned to the gift shop, membership, or to Dan Tomczak or Nina Smith in the aircrew coordinator office (in the upstairs conference room).

Submitting a request does not imply that the person will be selected to participate as a crewmember. It is only a request. All requests will be entered into a database. The participating personnel will be selected at least three weeks before an airshow. The selected crewmembers will be notified with a phone call, letter, or e-mail. Also at this time, 2-3 people will be selected as alternates. The confirmation letter will state the airshow, departure date and time,

aircrew leader, and any special instructions. Only the selected crewmembers will be notified.

The aircrew leader will be responsible to acquire the vehicles that we are entitled to, assign the drivers, check the aircrew into the hotel upon arrival, and coordinate the activities of the aircrew.

The selection process by definition cannot, and will not appear to most, to be fair. The criteria that will be used for selection is as follows:

- Members who, in the past, have been active in the organization will be given first choice of a position as aircrew. A person who shows up once or twice a year and does little will be considered last.
- Members who have demonstrated a willingness to do anything, anytime, without direction (we are a volunteer organization, after all) will be given first choice. When the aircraft are at an event, it is necessary for everyone to fill in as needed, so that the other aircrew members can take a break, eat, etc.
- Members, who specifically request one aircraft or one event, limit their chances to go, and make the selection process more difficult. Also if a member indicates that they will only perform a particular task and none other, the member lessens their chances.
- Accommodations also play a part in the selection process. For example, if a single woman is selected, it is necessary to select another woman to share accommodations with her. Rooms are based on double occupancy.

The coordinators will attempt to allow as many members of *any Division* to attend airshows as possible. However, as stated, those who have in the past demonstrated a willingness to work in whatever capacity as needed, or those who are willing to go on any of the Yankee aircraft, will be chosen more than others. When the museum attends an event that is particularly hectic, due to the crowd, Flight Experiences, or the number of crew available to work, it is necessary to have the most willing and best workers along. Please remember that acting as aircrew member is a privilege of membership, and not a right. I hope this helps to explain the procedures and reasoning for selecting aircrews.

(Continued on page 12)

If there are any questions please contact Dan Tomczak at the museum. Thank you.

WAR STORIES

Edited by Jim Beck

Eugene R. (Bob) Pittman, Maj. USAFR Ret.
YAF 5512

USAF active 5 1/2 years, Active Reserve, 15 1/2 years
Manufacturing Inspector FAA

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: We moved to Ann Arbor from Jackson county in 1928. I was six then, went to Bach School. I was always interested in aviation and went to all the airshows I could. In the 8th grade, I was fortunate to work on the construction of a primary glider as a school project. I graduated from Ann Arbor High School in 1940.

After some work with a publications company, I went to work at the Willow Run Bomber Plant in March of 1942, as an assemblyman. My badge number was BC4080 and my partner was a buddy from high school, Don Waters, BC4087. We were assigned to Center Wing Horizontal Department.

The building was still under construction but we began work on tooling for the B-24E based on parts shipped from Consolidated Aircraft in Ft. Worth. We were working on aircraft Serial Number 01. The wing and its tooling moved along a conveyor system where it received fuselage attach channels, bomb brackets, and fuel cells. I was over six feet tall then, Don was a little over five feet, so they naturally put me to bucking rivets inside the wing and him on the outside with the gun.

Because of modifications and repairs, S/N 01 was overweight according to specs. Don and I redesigned a number of parts, helping to get back to specs on succeeding planes. Although 01 finally flew in April or May, it was never sold to the Army.

MILITARY EXPERIENCE: We both became foremen in June and I worked in Center Wing until S/N 32. My draft number was coming up so I left in August to join the Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet. I graduated Bombardier School Class 43-9 in June 1943, and was shipped to Mountain Home, Idaho, for B-24 training. There I once flew in S/N 22, which I had worked on at

Willow.

In April 1944, I was shipped to Oahu on the Liberty ship S. S. Joe Fellows. We made the trip in a record eight days. The captain had had two Liberty ships sunk from under him and wanted to spend as little time in open water as possible.

Guam was next, where I was assigned to the 42nd Bomb Squadron, 11th Bomb Group, 7th Air Force. On my first combat mission, I had the distinction of being the first to use a radar-bombing computer (APQ-5B) at medium altitude against land targets. The aircraft of the 42nd were specially equipped with radar- and computer-aided bombing equipment for precision bombing at night and under low-visibility conditions.

Most of our missions consisted of mining harbors and bombing airfields. The Japanese had had some successes using Bettys to attack our B-29 base on Saipan. By flying single-aircraft night missions over Iwo, we were able to stop the air attacks on the field at Saipan. With sometimes as many as 40 or more other 24s, we flew some high level bombing missions against enemy airfields on Iwo Jima, Marcus, and Truk. I flew 40 combat missions, about half in "J" and half in "L" models. We had one "H" model named "Hap and Hank." The nose painting was a cartoon of Hap Arnold driving a Model T Ford.

I was rotated back to the States in May 1945. I had enough points to get out; but because of my MOS and experience with computer-aided radar bombing equipment, they kept me in. I was assigned to the Radio and Radar Laboratory at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. In July, 1945, they sent me to Boca Raton, Florida, to test a new bombing computer, the APQ-23 system. There I flew in B-29s, B-17s and B-24s.

I was recalled for the Korean "Conflict." From '51 to '53, I taught electronics at Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Mississippi, pulling additional duty as a navigator/bombardier on a B-25 crew patrolling the Gulf of Mexico. We were armed and looking for Soviet subs. It's probably good we didn't find any.

In August, 1953, I transferred to the reserves and did my weekend warrior duty at Selfridge AFB along with Scott Smith (YAF #SL 02327WR). As a civilian, I helped manufacture computers and helicopters and then became a manufacturing inspector for the FAA until I retired in 1984.

ONE WAR STORY: My 3rd mission, flown on 12 Nov 44, was memorable. We had been assigned by Admiral Hoover, of Admiral Nimitz' staff, to mine the harbors of the Bonin Islands north of Iwo Jima. The Bonins had two deep harbors, which were used to receive supplies by freighter from Japan for forwarding, via landing craft, to Iwo, where there were no deep water facilities. Without the harbors in the Bonins, Iwo would have had to be supplied by air.

I was flying in "*Wild Ass Ride*." The nose art was of a scantily clad young lady in a cowboy hat riding a donkey. We flew to Saipan, along with the four other bombers in our flight, to pick up mines from the Navy. Each aircraft took six 1000 lb. mines, loaded two to a bomb bay. The fourth bay held a 600 gallon auxiliary fuel tank which gave us a total of 3300 gallons aboard.

Each mine had a drag chute pod at the tail and a fuse on the side, which armed when it hit the water. The mines, containing an explosive more volatile than TNT, were designed to float gently down to the water then wobble as they sank to assure a soft landing on the sea floor. They had to be dropped from an altitude under 500 ft.

Our target for this mission was the harbor on the west shore of Haha Jima. The island was narrow, about five miles across at the middle. The harbor was at the end of a valley that twisted and turned up the center of the island. The plan called for us to fly up the valley to the target.

We took off about 2300 hours on the 11th, climbed to 10,000 feet, and made a feint toward Marcus Island to the east. We wanted the island radar to pick us up headed in that direction. We maintained our formation and separation by hand-held signal lamps with different colored lenses. We flew right wing to leader, so I could see the lamp of the tailgunner ahead of me and our tailgunner could see the lamp of the plane on our right.

We started into a slow descent as we turned to the NW. We leveled out at 100 feet. As dawn approached, with about 100 miles to go, we let down to 20 feet. You could see the roll of the sea and the prop wash in the water. At about 15 miles out, we could just see the outline of the island. Our ground speed was about 180 mph.

At the 5-mile point, we pulled up to 1500 feet to verify the entrance to the valley. As we came up to the valley, we could see a large cave-like depression in the mountainside and men moving into gun positions.

They looked like 40mm and 75mm guns. Our leader put the nose down to gain speed and gets us down to 100 feet. We were doing 200 mph as we made our strafing run the length of the valley. Men were running out of huts and scrambling to their guns while we bathed them in fire from 35 active 50s. We took a little small arms fire but nothing major before we were out of range.

We opened our bomb bay doors and began laying mines as we crossed over the shore of the bay. We flew in a "V" formation, which sowed a minefield about 500 feet wide. All our mines landed in the target area. Then we checked all our stations for damage and settled down for the five-hour flight back to Saipan.

* For those readers interested in some more of the details:

At the bomber plant, the Center Wing Horizontal Department office was near the big Ingersoll machine, which machined the motor landing gear attach points. The basic center wing assembly was located just before the big milling machine. S/N 04 was the first wing to be built in limited production.

About half of Bob's 40 missions were flown in a B-24L S/N 615 which was shot down after he was back stateside.

While three squadrons of the 11th Bomb Group were strafing and mining Haha Jima, the other three squadrons were bombing airfields and targets on the islands around Guam: Yap, Marcus, Iwo and others. The 30th Bomb Group, based on Tinian, bombed the airfield and docks of Chichi Jima, the largest of the Bonins.

The pilot of "*Wild Ass Ride*" for the mining raid on Haha Jima, was Jack Henry, who had joined the crew in August on Oahu. The rest of the crew had been together over a year: Clair Hines, co-pilot; Phil Reilly, navigator; Harvey Frnka, engineer; Jack Hayes, tail gunner; Hubert Lashmounts, waist gunner; Tom Byrnes, ball turret gunner; Harold Anderson, radar operator and waist gunner; Nick Kimpon, radio operator and nose gunner.

All these crew members returned home without major injuries.

JIM BECK – WAR STORIES EDITOR

FYI – Odds and Ends

By Bob Seaton

We received a submission recently on a 3.5 floppy disk. The person who sent his piece in on the disk asked if it was o.k. to do so (YES) and that maybe we should let you know about this. We have just done that. As we are now and have been for more than a year using desktop publishing to put together the newsletter, it makes our job much easier to get articles etc. either on a disk or by e-mail. I'll give you a very short course about how you can get things to us this way. Our software is MS Word™ based so if you have that or Works™ we can use it right away. We also can convert from most of the popular word processing programs, or as our latest member contributor did as text. For any of you who are using Windows 3.1™ that would be Rich Text Format and for Windows 95 or 98™ just text. We are already converting our e-mail to Word and just inserting it directly. The one thing we do not want to do is make you think that this is the only way we will accept something, though. We want to hear from you any way you feel comfortable with. We will draw the line at clay or stone tablets; our mailman (person) cannot negotiate the stairway with anything that heavy! Seriously, we pride ourselves on not ever (yet) turning anything down that we get. This is your newsletter, and if you have something that you think our members would be interested in, we would be very happy to get it.

On another subject...

Those of you who have checked out the Yankee Air Force website may have been very disappointed to see that much that was on was very out of date. The two people who built the site, and very well, for some reason have left the organization. That sort of thing is going to happen, very little we hope; but what was particularly bad was they didn't let anyone know. Well, what happened was that the e-mail that had not been answered totaled some 85 messages. Once again someone came forward to save the day. Don Burke (this guy is wearing so many hats now he has to carry a briefcase for them) and Tye Winkel have taken over as Webmasters. Don doesn't have a clue about what to do but Tye does (it's what he does for a living) and between the two of them the site is now looking better than ever. All of the e-mail was answered and continues to be, and all of the

schedules (airshow and coming events) are now current. It is hoped that in the very near future a computer will be available at the hangar to work on the site. At present this is all happening at the two Webmaster homes. Some of the e-mail was for information, and these were passed to our "Answer Man" Mr. Harold Sherman in the library. Harold has written these people back with the information they requested (this is why our library is so important) and one of these was from a gentleman in Belgium. If you haven't checked out the site lately give it a look, and Don and Tye will be updating even more, with newer photos and other information on a regular basis. One last note: the "*Happenin's*" is back on line, and you will also (we hope) be able to access our old issues (starting with March) to check up on us. You are, as in the past, able to print from the screen, either the whole newsletter or just certain pages. This will allow you to print copies of your literary work for your family and friends, and show them that you are famous!

*The Goose Story*

by Anonymous

When you see geese heading south for the winter flying along in V formation, consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. Geese who share common direction and sense of community can get where they're going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the trust of one another. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird to its front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we'll stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are. When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing, and another goose flies point. It's sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. What do we say when we honk from behind? Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, continued

two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection, staying with the fallen goose until it's able to fly or until it dies; only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group. If we have the sense of a goose, we'll stand by each other like that.



Do you recognize this person? This is going to be as hard as the last one. You know that the answer will be in next month's issue on page 2. **GOOD LUCK !**

BARRY'S BRAINBUSTER -

The present day Dearborn Engine plant was built for what purpose originally? You know that the answer will be hidden somewhere in this issue. Best of luck as we couldn't find last month's answer - did you?



In last month's issue we had a story by Ray Schneider about his nephew Mike Ferrario. We didn't receive it soon enough for the article, but here is Mike. We hope the proud uncle Ray will keep us up to date on how the "budding F-16 driver" is doing.

Meeting Notice - Flyable Aircraft meetings will be held every other month beginning 4/14/99. Meetings will begin at 7:30 pm in the "Dog House". Our flyable aircraft include:

B-17 C-47 B-25 C-60 (Lodestar)

Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings.



Newest members of Yankee Air Force :

Dennis Grundy (Junior Member), Rick Maybaugh, Douglas Likkel, Joseph Kenworthy, Tom Donkin, Larry Vincent, Joyce Parkinson (Junior Member), Pete Fahrenthold, Eric Holmes, Matt Paul, Rob Ball, Bob Zoller, Ethel Davis, Steve Miley (Wurtsmith), James Vance (Northeast), Richard Wendt, Marty Skrzynski and Dave Groh.



On Sunday March 7, 1999, a 1943 Beechcraft Staggerwing visited the Museum from Bloomington, Indiana. The pilot and his 5 passengers enjoyed their visit, and promised to bring the beautiful airplane back, possibly for our Memorial Day Open House.



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Hangar Happenin's is printed by Huron Valley Printing & Imaging. We would like to thank them for their support and technical assistance. We hope that if you are in need of printing work that you consider them for your job. Nice folks!

1999 YAF AIRSHOW SCHEDULE

B-17! C-47!	May 15-16	Azalea Festival	Grosse Ile, MI
B-17? C-47?	May 22-23?	"Barnstorm" Static Display	Grand Rapids, MI
B-17?	May 29	6th Annual Kruse A/C Auction	Auburn, IN
B-17! C-47!	May 31	YAF Memorial Day Open House	Willow Run, MI
B-17! C-47!	Jun 4-6	WWII Commemorative Weekend	Reading, PA
B-17!	Jun 11-12	Sidney Air Fair	Sidney, OH
C-47!	Jun 18-20	Plane & Car Show	Cheboygan, MI
B-17!	Jun 18-21	Aviation Hall of Fame Static Display	Teterboro, NJ
B-17! C-47!	Jun 26-27	Air Michigan-Wayne Co. Airshow	Willow Run, MI
B-17! C-47!	July 2-4	"Barnstorm" Static Display	Marquette, MI
B-17?	July 9-10	Sandusky Co. Reg. Airport Grand Opening	Sandusky, OH
B-17? C-47?	July 10-11	Sarnia Airshow	Sarnia, Ontario
B-17! C-47!	July 16-18	Hot Air Balloon Extravaganza	Jackson, MI
	July 17	WWII Aviation Symposium at YAF?	Willow Run, MI
	July 17-18?	P-51 Mustang Fly-in/Display at YAF?	Willow Run, MI
B-17! C-47!	July 23-25	Lorain County Airshow	Lorain, OH
B-17? C-47?	July 31- Aug 1	Armed Forces Airshow	Wilkes-Barre, PA
B-17!	Aug 14-15	YAF Wurtsmith Division Static Display	Oscoda, MI
B-17!	Aug 27-29	Arnold Fld Airsho '99 / Dyersburg AAB	Halls, TN
B-17!	Sep 4-6	Cleveland National Airshow	Cleveland OH
C-47!	Sep 12	Ann Arbor Airport Open House	Ann Arbor MI
B-17!	Sep 17-19	"Wings of Eagles" Airshow	Elmira, NY
		National Warplane Museum	
C-47?	Sep 18-19	St. Thomas International Airshow	St. Thomas, Ont.
B-17! C-47!	Sep 26	YAF Founders' Day Open House	Willow Run, MI
B-17! C-47!	Oct.2-3	Delaware Air Fair	Delaware, OH
! aircraft scheduled		? scheduling not determined	as of 3/13/99

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